

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 3 and 17 to 24 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, amend Claims 1, 2 and 4 to 16, and add new Claims 35 to 43 as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, now read as follows:

1. (Currently amended) An information processing system apparatus for managing plural types of maintenance agreements relating agreement information corresponding to ~~an identifier for specifying~~ an image forming apparatus, comprising:

an acquisition section for acquiring a number of printed paper sheets from an image forming apparatus via a communication path;

a memory for storing a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet ~~printed~~ and output by the image forming apparatus in accordance with ~~whether the~~ types of maintenance agreements of a content of services agreement information includes maintenance information by a serviceman of the image forming apparatus; and

a calculation section for calculating a payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets acquired by said acquisition section and (ii) a [[the]] charge amount of the variety of charge amounts stored in said memory for the image forming apparatus from which the number of printed paper sheets is acquired stored in said memory.

2. (Currently amended) The system apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said memory stores a first charge amount per printed sheet in correspondence with an agreement of a first type and ~~output paper sheet including maintenance by the serviceman~~

and a second charge amount per printed sheet in correspondence with an agreement of a second type,

wherein the contents of services under each of the agreements of the first type and the second type differ from each other, and

wherein the amount of the second charge is an additional amount of the first charge and a predetermined ~~without the maintenance, the first charge amount being added with a maintenance cost, unlike the second charge amount.~~

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) The system apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an acceptance section for accepting an instruction for instructing an agreement through a window based upon information of an agreement instruction window,

wherein said calculation section calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed by the instruction accepted by said acceptance section and (ii) the number of printed sheets acquired by said acquisition section ~~a communication section for generating and transmitting window information for changing the maintenance agreement information stored in said memory.~~

5. (Currently amended) The system apparatus according to claim 1 [[4]], further comprising a retrieval section for retrieving agreement information of a most suitable agreement based upon running information of the image forming apparatus, and

an information section for informing a user of a result of retrieval by said retrieval section wherein said communication section receives use situation information of the image forming apparatus and notifies a user of agreement information corresponding to the received use situation information.

6. (Currently amended) The system apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a second acceptance section for accepting an instruction for instructing (i) a type of agreement through a window based upon information of an agreement instruction window and (ii) a period of the type of agreement,

wherein said calculation section calculates the payable amount in the instructed period accepted by said second acceptance section based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the type of agreement in the instructed period and (ii) the number of printed sheets is a number of sheets printed during the instructed period wherein said apparatus further comprises a recognition section for recognizing the total number of printed paper sheets of the image forming apparatus in a predetermined period, and said calculation section calculates the payable amount in accordance with the total number of printed paper sheets recognized by said recognition section and the maintenance agreement information corresponding to the image forming apparatus.

7. (Currently amended) An information processing method of calculating a charge for use of an image forming apparatus by a user, comprising the steps of:

acquiring a number of printed paper sheets from an image forming apparatus via a communication path;

storing a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet output by the image forming apparatus to a memory in accordance with the types of maintenance agreements of a content of services by a serviceman of the image forming apparatus; and

calculating a payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets acquired by said acquisition section and (ii) a charge amount of the variety of charge amounts stored in said memory for the image forming apparatus from which the number of printed paper sheets is acquired.

~~determining contents of a maintenance agreement of each image forming apparatus, which is stored in a memory; and~~

~~calculating a payable amount on the basis of a unit price corresponding to the contents of the maintenance agreement and a charge amount stored in the memory.~~

8. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 7, wherein said storing step stores a first charge amount per printed sheet in correspondence with an agreement of a first type and a second charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with an agreement of a second type,

wherein the contents of services under each of the agreements of the first type and the second type differ from each other, and

wherein the amount of the second charge is an additional amount of the first charge and a predetermined ~~the memory stores a first charge amount per printed and output paper sheet including maintenance by a serviceman and a second charge amount without the maintenance, the first charge amount being added with a maintenance cost, unlike the second charge amount.~~

9. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 7, further comprising an accepting step of accepting an instruction for instructing an agreement through a window based upon information of an agreement instruction window,
wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount based upon (i) as charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed by the instruction accepted in said accepting step and (ii) the number of printed sheets acquired in said acquiring step ~~the communication step of generating and transmitting window information for changing maintenance agreement information stored in the memory.~~

10. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 9, further comprising:
a retrieving step of retrieving agreement information of a most suitable agreement based upon running information of the image forming apparatus; and
an informing step of informing a user of a result of retrieval by said retrieval step ~~wherein the communication step comprises receiving use situation information of the image forming apparatus and notifying the user of agreement information corresponding to the received use situation information.~~

11. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 7, further comprising a second accepting step for accepting an instruction for instructing (i) a type of agreement through a window based upon information of an agreement instruction window and (ii) a period of the type of agreement,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount in the instructed period accepted by said second accepting step based upon (I) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement in the instructed period and (ii) the number of printed sheets is a number of sheets printed during the instructed period wherein said method further comprises the count step of counting the total number of printed paper sheets of the image forming apparatus in a predetermined period, and the calculation step comprises calculating the payable amount in accordance with the total number of printed paper sheets counted in the count step and the maintenance agreement information corresponding to the image forming apparatus.

12. (Currently amended) A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium for calculating a charge for use of an image forming apparatus by a user to be executed by a computer, comprising codes for the steps of:

acquiring a number of printed paper sheets from an image forming apparatus via a communication path;

storing a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet output by the image forming apparatus to a memory in accordance with the types of maintenance agreements of a content of services by a serviceman of the image forming apparatus; and

calculating as payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets acquired by said acquisition section and (ii) a charge amount of the variety of charge amounts stored in said memory for the image forming apparatus from which the number of printed paper sheets is acquired

~~a program code for determining contents of a maintenance agreement of each image forming apparatus, which is stored in a memory, and~~

~~a program code for calculating a payable amount on the basis of a unit price corresponding to the contents of the maintenance agreement and a charge amount stored in the memory.~~

13. (Currently amended) The program according to claim 12, wherein said storing step stores a first charge amount per printed sheet in correspondence with an agreement of a first type and a second charge amount per printed sheet in correspondence with an agreement of a second type,

wherein the contents of services under each of the agreements of the first type and the second type differ from each other, and

wherein the amount of the second charge is an additional amount of the first charge and a predetermined ~~the memory stores a first charge amount per printed and output paper sheet including maintenance by a serviceman and a second charge amount without the maintenance, the first charge amount being added with a maintenance cost, unlike the second charge amount.~~

14. (Currently amended) The program according to claim 12, further comprising a program code for a step of accepting an instruction for instructing an agreement through a window based upon information of an agreement instruction window,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed by the

instruction accepted in said accepting step and (ii) the number of printed sheets acquired in said acquiring step ~~generating and transmitting window information for changing maintenance agreement information stored in the memory.~~

15. (Currently amended) The program according to claim 12, further comprising:

program code for a step of retrieving agreement information of a most suitable agreement based upon running information of the image forming apparatus; and
program code for a step of informing a user of a result of retrieval by said retrieval step ~~wherein the program code for transmission comprises receiving use situation information of the image forming apparatus and notifying the user of agreement information corresponding to the received use situation information.~~

16. (Currently amended) The program according to claim 12, further comprising code for a second accepting step for accepting an instruction for instructing (i) a type of agreement through a window based upon information of an agreement instruction window and (ii) a period of the type of agreement,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount in the instructed period accepted in said second accepting step based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement in the instructed period and (ii) the number of printed sheets is the number of sheets printed during the instructed period ~~wherein said program further comprises a program code for counting the total number of printed paper sheets of the image forming apparatus in a predetermined period; and the program code for~~

~~calculation comprises calculating the payable amount in accordance with the total number of printed paper sheets counted by the program code for counting and the maintenance agreement information corresponding to the image forming apparatus.~~

17. to 24. (Canceled)

25. (Withdrawn) An information processing apparatus for executing processing related to an expendable used in an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a window information generation section for generating window information for designating a time of delivery of a new expendable and collection of a remaining component of a used expendable; and

a transmission section for transmitting the window information generated by said window information generation section to the image forming apparatus.

26. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said apparatus further comprises a use amount acquisition section for acquiring use amount information representing a use amount of the expendable, which is issued from a device using the expendable, and said transmission section transmits the window information on the basis of the use amount information acquired by said use amount acquisition section.

27. (Withdrawn) An information processing method by an information processing apparatus for executing processing related to an expendable used in an image forming apparatus, comprising:

the window information generation step of generating window information for designating a time of delivery of a new expendable and collection of a remaining component of a used expendable; and

the transmission step of transmitting the window information generated in the window information generation step to the image forming apparatus.

28. (Withdrawn) A program code to be executed by a computer, comprising:
a program code for generating window information for designating a time of delivery of a new expendable to be used by an image forming apparatus and collection of a remaining component of a used expendable; and

a program code for transmitting the window information generated by a window information generation section to the image forming apparatus.

29. (Withdrawn) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a computer program to be executed by a computer, said program code comprising:
a program code for generating window information for designating a time of delivery of a new expendable to be used by an image forming apparatus and collection of a remaining component of a used expendable; and

a program code for transmitting the window information generated by window information generation section to the image forming apparatus.

30. (Withdrawn) An information processing apparatus comprising:
reception means for receiving malfunction information of an image forming apparatus; and
transmission means for transmitting the received malfunction information to a computer provided in a service division for coping with a malfunction of the image forming apparatus.

31. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 30, further comprising window information generation means for generating window information for inputting and transmitting the malfunction information of the image forming apparatus.

32. (Withdrawn) An information processing method comprising:
the reception step of receiving malfunction information of an image forming apparatus; and
the transmission step of transmitting the received malfunction information to a computer provided in a service division for coping with a malfunction of the image forming apparatus.

33. (Withdrawn) A program code to be executed by a computer, comprising:
a program code for receiving malfunction information of an image forming apparatus; and

a program code for transmitting the received malfunction information to a computer provided in a service division for coping with a malfunction of the image forming apparatus.

34. (Withdrawn) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a computer program to be executed by a computer, said program code comprising:

a program code for receiving malfunction information of an image forming apparatus; and

a program code for transmitting the received malfunction information to a computer provided in a service division for coping with a malfunction of the image forming apparatus.

35. (New) The system according to Claim 1, further comprising a provision section for providing an external apparatus with a section for providing information of an agreement instruction window which is readable by a web browser,

wherein said calculation section calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed through a display window of the external apparatus based upon the information of agreement instruction window and (ii) the number of printed sheets acquired by said acquisition section.

36. (New) The system according to Claim 1, further comprising a transmitter for transmitting a window for confirming an identifier and an agreement corresponding to the identifier to the external apparatus.

37. (New) The method according to Claim 7, further comprising a providing step of providing an external apparatus with a section for providing information of an agreement instruction window which is readable by a web browser,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed through a display window of the external apparatus based upon the information of agreement instruction window and (ii) the number of printed sheets acquired in said acquiring step.

38. (New) The method according to Claim 7, further comprising a transmitting step of transmitting a window for confirming an identifier and an agreement corresponding to the identifier to the external apparatus.

39. (New) The computer program according to Claim 12, further comprising program code for providing an external apparatus with a section for providing information of an agreement instruction window which is readable by a web browser,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed through a display window of the external apparatus based upon the information of an agreement instruction window and (ii) the number of printed sheets acquired in said acquiring step.

40. (New) The computer program according to Claim 12, further comprising a program code for transmitting a window for confirming an identifier and an agreement corresponding to the identifier to the external apparatus.

41. (New) An information processing system for managing plural types of maintenance agreements relating to an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a managing section for managing agreement information of an agreement of maintenance of the image forming apparatus by a serviceman, wherein the agreement is an agreement of a first type corresponding to a first maintenance content or an agreement of a second type corresponding to a second maintenance content;

an acquisition section for acquiring information of a number of printed sheets by the image forming apparatus via a communication path;

a memory for storing a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet in accordance with whether the type of agreement for the image forming apparatus is the first type or the second type, in correspondence with the image forming apparatus; and

a calculation section for calculating a payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets acquired by said acquisition section and (ii) a charge amount stored in said memory in correspondence with the image forming apparatus.

42. (New) An information processing method for managing plural types of maintenance agreements relating to an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a managing step of managing agreement information of an agreement of maintenance of the image forming apparatus by a serviceman, wherein the agreement is an

agreement of the first type corresponding to the first maintenance content or an agreement of the second type corresponding to the second maintenance content;

an acquiring step of acquiring information of a number of printed sheet by the image forming apparatus via a communication path;

a storing step of storing a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet to a memory in accordance with whether the type of agreement for the image forming apparatus is the first type or the second type, in correspondence with the image forming apparatus; and

a calculating step of calculating a payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets acquired by said acquisition section and (ii) a charge amount stored in said memory in correspondence with the image forming apparatus.

43. (New) A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium for calculating a charge for use of an image forming apparatus by a user, comprising codes for the steps of:

managing agreement information of an agreement of maintenance of an image forming apparatus by a serviceman, wherein the agreement is an agreement of the first type corresponding to the first maintenance content or an agreement of the second type corresponding to the second maintenance content;

acquiring information of a number of printed sheets by the image forming apparatus via a communication path;

storing a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet to a memory in accordance with whether the type of agreement for the image forming apparatus is the first type or the second type, in correspondence with the image forming apparatus; and

calculating a payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets acquired by said acquisition section and (ii) a charge amount stored in said memory in correspondence with the image forming apparatus.